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A Research To Determine The Relationship Between Organizational Justice and Psychological Ownership Among Non-Family Employees in a Family Business

Ceren Giderler Atalay^{a*}Derya Ergun Özler^b^a*Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, Kütahya, 43000, Turkey*

Abstract

The concept of ownership which has been the focus of attention by scholars and business managers has three different dimensions. These are legal-economic, psychological and social ownership. This research is mainly concerned with psychological ownership that can be stated as a question “How much do I feel this organization is mine?” This can be the most congenial for family and paradoxically the most repellent question for non-family members in a family business. In family businesses, there are two different groups as the family members and the non-family members. In order to develop a sense of psychological ownership in family enterprises, managers should uphold justice between family members and non-family members. Therefore, this study examines the relation between organizational justice and psychological ownership within a family business. To fulfill this purpose, we studied a large scale ceramic company employing 70 white collar employees in the Turkey. The main hypothesis of the study - that “Organizational justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business”- seems valid from the results obtained. Furthermore it has been concluded that there is a significant relationship between organizational justice and psychological ownership.

Keywords: Organizational Justice, Psychological Ownership Distributive Justice , Procedural Justice, Interactional Justice, Family Business.

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1. Introduction

What distinguishes a family business from a non-family business is not simply the capital structure of the firm but the role the family plays in the organization, identity, vision and operations of the firm. Therefore the concept of family business can broadly be defined as a business governed by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family or a small number of families who intend to shape and pursue the overall vision of the business held (Chua et al., 1999:25). As such, families as owners are likely to affect the development of a strong sense of

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +90-274 2652193; fax: +90-274 2652197
E-mail address: giderler_ceren@hotmail.com

organizational identification among their employees differently than owners of non-family firms (Carmon et al., 2010:211).

Justice as a basic requirement for the effective functioning of organizations and the personal satisfaction of the individuals they employ has long been recognized (e.g., Greenberg, 1990:399). Employees' perceptions of how similar they see themselves to other employees depend on their beliefs whether they are treated fairly. Perceptions of organizational justice will contribute to how connected individuals feel with the family businesses they work for. Previous research has found strong, positive correlation between perceptions of organizational justice and perceptions of co-worker identification, satisfaction, and support as well as affective commitment (Byrne, 2003; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt et. al., 2001; Carmon et. al., 2010; Olkkonen and Lipponen, 2006; Loi-Hang-Yue and Fuley, 2006).

Early studies on organizational justice were primarily concerned with distributive justice which was grounded in Adams' (1965) equity theory suggesting that an individual calculates his/her perceived input–outcome ratio and then compares this ratio with that of a referent other. Unequal input–outcome ratios between the individual and the referent other (i.e. the presence of inequity) leads to a feeling of unfairness experienced by both parties. Motivated by this feeling of discomfort, both parties would rectify the unjust situation by reacting behaviorally (e.g. altering job performance) or psychologically (e.g. altering perception of outcomes) (Greenberg, 1990). The focus of justice research later shifted to procedural justice (e.g. Fry, 1980; Thibaut and Walker, 1975) when scholars noted that distributive justice could not address an individual's fair procedure pursuit (Greenberg, 1990). In the organizational context, procedural justice is considered an important resource in social exchange. It influences employees' judgment of the quality of exchange relationship with their organization (Masterson et al., 2000). Nevertheless, the increasing attention paid to procedural justice tends to deemphasize the role of distributive justice in the employee–organization exchange (Loi et al., 2006:103-104).

The reason we believe that there should be a relation between organizational justice and psychological ownership is that both have strong influence on self-perception. Nevertheless there are few articles about organizational justice and psychological ownership (e.g. Loi, Hang-yue and Foley, 2006; Pierce et al., 2003; Pierce et. al., 2001; Sieger, 2011). In this research we tried to establish non-family employees' perceptions of justice and levels of psychological ownership in a family business. Furthermore, another aim of the study is to indicate whether the main features of the employees (gender, age, marital status, education status, working year, serving year, the number of subordinates, department) influence organizational justice and psychological ownership.

2. Literature Review And Hypotheses

2.1. Literature Review

Employees are concerned with both the fairness of outcomes that they receive and the fairness of their treatment within the organization (Williams et al., 2002:34). Sheppard et al., (1992) present two principles to judge the justice of decision, procedure or action. The first principle of justice requires a judgment of balance. The principle requires one to compare a given decision against other similar decisions in similar conditions. Comparisons of balance are made by evaluating the outcomes of two or more people and equating those outcomes to the value of the inputs they provide to the business. The second internal principles of justice are correctness. Correctness can be seen as the quality which makes the decision seen right. Therefore one makes decisions about the perceived justice of some action that harms or benefits someone by deciding whether the action appears to be both balanced and correct (Lee, 2000:19)

Most justice researches accepts that three fundamental justice types exist that are distributive, procedural, and interactional (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Konovsky, 2000). The early have focused on distributive justice meaning the fairness of outcomes or the “what” side of the decisions. The distributive justice theories were strongly built and understood by theorists. However following procedural justice studies, meaning the perceived fairness of policies and procedures upon which the decisions are based or the “how” side of the decisions, has proved to be a significant effect on organizational justice literature (Greenberg, 1990; Piaali, 2007:48). Distributive justice was focused on “content-the fairness of the ends achieved” (Greenberg, 1990:400) and “the fairness of the outcomes an employee receives” (Moorman, 1991:845).

Interactional justice was first coined by Bies and Moag (1986) and more recently it has come to be seen as consisting of two important types of interpersonal treatment (Greenberg, 1990; 1993). The first dimension, labeled interpersonal justice, reflects the degree to which people have treated with politeness, dignity and respect by authorities involved in executing procedures on determining outcomes. The second dimension, labeled informational justice, focuses on the explanations provided to people that convey information about why procedures were used in a certain way or why outcomes were distributed in a certain style (Colquitt et al., 2001:427).

The concept of ownership can be defined in several ways. Koiranen (2006) has compared different dimensions of ownership and their characters, natures and routes (see Table 1) (Rautiainen, 2012:50-51):

Table 1: Types of ownership (Koiranen, 2006)

Type of ownership	Character	Nature	Routes
Legal-economic	Socially constructed and institutionalized	Absolute, verifiable, easily transferable	Social agreements, like law
Psychological	Emotional Relativistic	Processual Intimate knowing	Controllability Self-investment
Social, i.e. socio-psychological and socio-symbolic	Socially constructed and/or internalized in a process of interaction	Relativistic Processual	Values, Symbols, Learned and shared meanings

Although ownership is usually seen in terms of legal or financial, typically subject-object association, it is multidimensional in nature and operates both as a formal (objective) and psychologically experienced phenomenon (Pierce et al., 2001). Other forms of ownership also exist, such as psychological, social-psychological, and socio-symbolic ownership. These forms of ownership can exist even without legal ownership and are typically based on emotions and feelings. The personal/psychological dimension includes “goals, ambition, motivation, commitment, responsibilities, and other things in the mind of an owner that link him to the target of owning” (Mattila and Ikävalko, 2003). Property and ownership are both real as well as psychologically experienced, as they exist in the ‘mind’ (Etzioni, 1991). Etzioni (1991) extended ownership from legal-economic to a more psychological (emotional and behavioural) dimension. According to Etzioni (1991), “Ownership is a dual creation, part attitude, part object, part in mind, part real”. It is the individual who manifests the experienced rights associated with psychological ownership. Socio-symbolic ownership (based on a status, a role, or an identity) extends the meaning of ownership beyond its general financial, legal, and structural definition; it is constructed by possessions (Nordqvist, 2005). Dittmar (1992) Socio-psychological ownership refers more to possessing something through (affective and collectivistic) emotions. In socio-psychological and socio-symbolic ownership, one’s possessions are experienced as extensions of the self (Rautiainen, 2012:50-51).

Druscat and Pescosolido (2002), Psychological ownership means a cognitive and emotive attachment between the individual and the object, which in turn influences our self-perception and conduct. Just like the case with attitudes, psychological ownership has cognitive, emotional and behavioural elements and can exist on individual level or group level. Pierce, Kostova and Dirks (2001) dissociate the concept of psychological ownership from the concepts such as organizational commitment, organizational identification and job satisfaction. While psychological ownership answers the question “How far do I feel that this organization belongs to me”, organizational commitment searches for the answer for “Should I stay in this organization and why”, organizational identification with the organization answers to “Who am I”, internalization to “What do I believe” and job satisfaction answers to “What kind of judgments do I have about my job” (Özler et al., 2008:38).

Pierce, Rubenfeld and Morgan (1991) in a review of the employee ownership literature theorize that formal ownership may produce positive attitudinal and behavioural effects through psychologically experienced ownership. Kubzonsky and Druscat (1993) suggest that the psychological sense of ownership may be an integral part of the employee’s relationship with the organization (cited in Pierce and et al., 2001:298).

Different researchers suggest that three basic motives constituting the basis for psychological ownership; attaining the desired results or efficacy and effectance, attaining self-identity and self-expression and the will to have a place to dwell. Three basic experiences growing in relation to and completing the above mentioned motives and amplifying

psychological ownership are the facilities of control, self-investment and procuring information (Ozler et al, 2008:40). First it can nurture feelings of efficacy, since "to have" is the ultimate form of control, whereby being in control leads to the perception that one "is the cause" and that one has altered or is able to alter the circumstances (Beggan, 1992). Second, ownership helps people define themselves, express their self-identity to others and maintain the continuity of the self. As such, possessions or what is perceived to be mine can have an identity forging and maintaining function (Kamptner, 1989; Price, Arnould, & Folkman Curasi, 2000). Finally, psychological ownership scholars suggest that having a place, and hence the need for territoriality and security may also be nurtured by ownership (Porteous, 1976). The target of ownership feelings finally becomes part of the psychological owner's identity; one's possessions are felt as extensions of the self (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992; Pierce et al., 2001; Sieger, 2011:56). The idea of psychology ownership for the organization (i.e., the possessive feeling that some object is "MINE" or "OURS") has received increasing attention from scholars and practitioners as a potentially important predictor of employee attitudes and behaviors. Psychological ownership is the psychologically experienced phenomenon in which an employee develops possessive feelings for the target. Different targets of ownership can vary in salience, depending on the individual and the situation. For example, some employees have psychological ownership for their work and others might have ownership feelings for the overall organization (Dyne and Pierce, 2004:439-442).

Although legal ownership and psychological ownership are closely related (i.e., legal owners will have higher psychological ownership than legal non-owners), psychological ownership and legal ownership can operate separately from each other. Specifically, psychological ownership can exist without legal ownership, as with prefactual ownership or through imagery, touch, or creative design (Fuchs et al., 2010; Peck and Shu, 2009; Reb and Connolly, 2007). In contrast, legal ownership can operate without psychological ownership when the reference point is shifted so that the object is no longer part of the endowment, such as through changes in cognitive perspective (Johnson et al., 2007; List, 2003). In these situations, "not owning" becomes the reference point, and giving up the object is no longer seen as a loss (Shu and Peck, 2011:440).

The literature on psychological ownership mainly focuses on its relation with distributive and procedural justice, probably because employees' perception about justice mostly takes these dimensions into account. Employees believe that organizational procedures are not fair enough to themselves or justice is neglected in the distribution of rewards and resources.

Beggan (1992) argues that with increased justice, a just family firm appears attractive to non-family employees as favorable judgments are related to possessive feelings. Pierce et al. (2003, 94) state that "attributes like attractiveness [...] render the target more or less subject to psychological ownership". In summary, there is enough reason to argue that a perceived distributive justice makes the family firm a more attractive object for psychological ownership and thus fosters the investment of non-family employees' personal resources. In terms of procedural justice, just procedures will make non-family employees perceive that the family firm as a whole is just, which facilitates the evolvment of ownership feelings. Just procedures, furthermore, give non-family employees a sense of influence and control, which is one of the main antecedents to psychological ownership (Sieger et al., 2011:91-92).

2.2. Hypotheses

Hypotheses of the study are:

- H₁: Organizational justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business.
- H₂: Distributive justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business.
- H₃: Procedural justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business
- H₄: Interactional justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business According to academic title of academicians, there are meaningful differences in optimism level.

3. Methodology

The purpose, model, universe, sampling of study, data collection method and the statistical techniques used in analyzing are respectively explained in this section.

3.1. Purpose of The Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether or not there is a relationship between organizational justice and psychological ownership. In this research we tried to establish non-family employees' perceptions of justice and levels of psychological ownership in a family business and then the hypotheses were tested accordingly.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The main aim of the study is to reveal the relationship between organizational justice and psychological ownership in the family business. A large family business operating in Turkey constitutes the universe of the study. To these ends, it was determined white collar employees of a large family business (including 90 personnel) as a population of study and 87 of them have been surveyed and 17 surveys have been excluded since they are invalid and the data about 70 employees have been analyzed.

3.3. Analyses and Results

Survey has been used as data gathering tool. Survey form consists of 44 questions and 3 sections. The first section consists of 9 questions developed to determine demographic characteristics of business employees. In second section, we have used "Organizational Justice Scale" consisting of 27 rating statements developed by Özen İşbaşı (2000), that is adapted from researches of other scholars (Moorman, 1991; Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Folger and Konovsky, 1989). There are three dimensions in organizational justice scale; distributive, procedural and interactional justice. There are 7 items in distributive, 7 items procedural and 13 items in interactional justice dimension. In third section, we used "Psychological Ownership Scale" consisting of 7 rating statements developed by Pierce et al. (1992), with further validation provided by numerous scholars (e.g., Mayhew et al., 2007; O'Driscoll et al., 2006; Pierce et. al. 2004). Organizational Justice and psychological ownership were measured by using a 5-point scale with labels "I strongly disagree", "I disagree", "I am not sure", "I agree", "I strongly agree". As to implementing "Organizational Justice Scale" in statistical analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency reliability of the scale and it was determined that alpha value of the scale was 0,898 and "Psychological Ownership Scale" Cronbach's alpha is 0,830. It can be stated that scales have high alpha values and they show adequate reliability to statistical analyze.

The data obtained from surveys within the study has been analyzed using SPSS 16.0. Firstly, in the descriptive statistics section, frequency and percentage techniques have been used in analyzing the data. Then, the relationships between variables have been analyzed with correlation and regression analysis; the differences between groups have been analyzed with T-test and ANOVA test, Factor analysis and the results have been interpreted.

Respondents in the study were asked several demographic questions, including gender, age group, marital status, working year in the company and on duty, number of employees, educational level, position, department and neighborhood relationship. Demographic characteristics of sample are shown in table 2. It was found that most of participants are male employees. On the other hand, results indicated that large majority of participants (55,0%) have not a management role (number of employees) Besides, it was found that 29% of participants are in working department of accounting, %52 of participants have graduate degree.

Table 2: Sample Characteristics

Gender	F	%	Working Year In The Company	F	%	Working Year On Duty	F	%
Male	50	71,4	0-1	18	25,7	0-1	18	25,7
Female	20	28,6	1-10	29	41,4	1-10	37	52,9
Total	70	100	11-20	13	18,6	11-20	12	17,1
			20+	10	14,3	20+	3	4,3
			Total	70	100	Total	70	100
Marital Status	F	%	Number of Employees	F	%	Age	F	%
Single	34	48,6	0	55	78,6	18-25	11	15,7
Married	36	51,4	1-5	5	7,1	26-40	42	60,0
Total	70	100	6-10	3	4,3	41-55	17	24,3
			11-20	3	4,3	Total	70	100
			20+	4	5,7			
			Total	70	100			
Position	F	%	Educational Level	F	%	Department	F	%
Officer	48	68,6	Primary school	1	1,4	Production	10	14,3
Head Officer	8	11,4	High school	6	8,6	Marketing	8	11,4
Manager	3	4,3	Academy	8	11,4	Human Resource	2	2,9
Other	11	15,7	Graduate	52	74,3	Accounting	29	41,4
Total	70	100	Post-Graduate	3	4,3	Financing	2	2,9
			PhD	-	-	Research and Development	-	-
			Total	70	100			
						Other	19	27,1
						Total	70	100

In the study, factor analysis is used to data reduction for items in organizational justice scale. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was performed on 27 items. Based on criteria of minimum eigenvalues 3-factor solution was derived, 3 Factors accounted for 74,5% of variance in the items, and 22 of the 27 items loaded on the factors. 5 items failed to load on any factor and a second factor analysis was run with remaining 22 items. All items loaded on their appropriate factor (>0.40) and all subscales showed a high degree reliability (vary from 0.928 to 0.954). The data represented the three factors well with factor loadings ranging from 0.633 to 0.825 for factor 1, from 0.472 to 0.796 for factor 2 and from 0.570 to 0.887 for factor 3.

Table 3: Findings of Factor Analysis

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0,904
Barlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1634,315
	Coefficient of Determination (df)	231
	The Level of Significance (p)	0,000
Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained
1 (IJC 1-4-5-6-7-8-10-11-12)	13,537	61,531
2 (PJC 1-2-3-4-5; IJC 2-3-9)	1,684	7,654
3 (DJC 1-2-3-4-5)	1,186	5,391
Factors and Factor Loads		
Factors	Factors Loads	Cronbach's Alpha
Interactional Justice Component (IJC)	0,633-0,825	0,954
Prosedural Justice Component (PJC)	0,472-0,796	0,933
Distributive Justice Component (DJC)	0,570-0,887	0,928

Table 4: Findings and Test Results Related to Cynicism Pearson Correlation Analysis

N=70	Organizational Justice	Factor 1	Factor2	Factor 3
Psychological Ownership	,376**	,349**	,324*	,374**
Factor 1	,939**	1	,819**	,680**
Factor 2	,943**	,819**	1	,755**
Factor 3	,848**	,680**	,755**	1

* (p<0,05) ** (p<0,01)

The findings related to Pearson Correlation Analysis to determine the course and degree of the relationship between organizational justice and psychological ownership could be seen in table 3. Having looked into the table, it is seen that the highest degree is ($r=374$; $p<0,05$) between “psychological ownership” and “Factor 3”.

Regression analyses have been carried out for the hypotheses (H1 - H4) based on the relationships related to organizational justice and psychological ownership. Forward Selection Method was used to determine the variables which include the regression model. The results are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Findings Related to Single-Regression Analysis

R² = 0,134 F= 10,535 R= 0,366 Significance Level=,002			
Variables	B Coefficient	t Value	p Value
Invariable	-	6,669	,000
Organizational Justice	,366	3,246	,002

According to the results of the regression analysis related to the relationship between variables, there is relatively weak relationship (0,366) between organizational justice and psychological ownership in significance level of 0,002.

As it is seen in table 4, the β coefficient of psychological ownership factor explaining the change in the dependent level is 0,366 and statistically significant. According to the results, H_1 : “Organizational justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business” has been accepted. As it is seen in Table 6, the β coefficient of Factor 3 explaining the change in the dependent level is 0,374 and statistically significant. According to the results, H_2 : “Distributive justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business” has been accepted. However, there isn’t a statistically significant relationship between Factor 1, Factor 2 and psychological ownership. Therefore, H_3 and H_4 have been rejected.

Table 6: Findings Related to Multi-Regression

R² = 0,140 F= 11,072 R= 0,374 Significance Level=,001			
Variables	β Coefficient	t Value	p Value
Invariable	-	10,486	,000
Factor3	,374	3,327	,001
Excluded Variables in Model			
Factor1	0,175	1,147	0,255
Factor2	0,566	0,573	0,573

After state mean of organizational justice and psychological ownership of participants, it has turned to come analyzing mean differences according to demographic factors for testing of study. The findings of the study have been taken place in table 6. The research has nine demographic questions but only three of them have a significant relationship with organizational justice and psychological ownership.

Table 7: Findings About Demographic Factors of Study

Demographic Factors	TEST TYPE	TEST VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE	RELATONSHIP
According to gender of employees, there are meaningful differences in Perceptions of Organizational Justice or Psychological Ownership.	T-Test	-2,696	p<0,00	With perceptions of organizational justice
According to working year on duty of employees, there are meaningful differences in Perceptions of Organizational Justice or Psychological Ownership.	ANOVA	2,547	p<0,05	With Psychological ownership
According department of employees, there are meaningful differences in Perceptions of Organizational Justice or Psychological Ownership.	ANOVA	2,819	P<0,05	With Psychological ownership

According to Table 7, there are meaningful differences in levels of organizational justice perceptions according to gender of employees. The result of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test (Tukey) showed meaningful differences between groups of woman and man; working year on duty and department. Namely, levels of organizational justice perceptions who are women have higher than men. As working on duty years of employees increase, level of psychological ownership also increase. Psychological ownership levels of employees have been changed according to their department. Employees who have been working in department of human resource management have most level psychological ownership. Levels of psychological ownership of employees who have been worked in department of marketing are higher than employees who have been worked in department of production. Employees who have been worked in the others departments of business have lower psychological ownership level.

Conclusion

It is seen that there is a moderate positive relationship in correlation analysis between organizational justice and psychological ownership. Hence, it could be said that employees’ perceptions of justice can affect their level of psychological ownership. Another positive moderate relationship in correlation analysis was found between distributive justice that is sub-dimension of organizational justice and psychological ownership. But no relationship between the others sub-dimensions of organizational justice and psychological ownership has been found. So, it could be stated that employees’ perceptions of distributive justice is an effective ingredient on creation of psychological ownership.

In the regression analysis, there seems to be a weak positive relationship between organizational justice and psychological ownership. The fact that the individuals have positive beliefs about their organization (they believe that the organization lacks justice and honesty and they distrust the organization) may cause them to have psychological

ownership. However, there is a moderate positive relationship between distributive justice that its sub-dimension of organizational justice and psychological ownership. Another finding is that employees have attached more importance to the fairness of outcome distributions such as pay and promotion than to procedural and interactional justice.

It could be stated that our findings are consistent and coherent with conclusions of previous studies concerning psychological ownership. For instance, Loi, Hang-yue and Foley (2006) explained that when employees perceive distributive justice in their business, they are motivated to repay and increase their self-investment in there. At the same time, the investment of “time, ideas, skills and physical, psychological and intellectual energies” can affect level of their psychological ownership (Loi, Hang-yue, Foley, 2006; Pierce et al., 2003; Pierce et al., 2001)

Sieger (2011) has found a result that distributive justice perceptions of non-family employees are positively related to their psychological ownership toward the family business. Sieger, Bernhard and Frey (2011) have stated that there is good reason to believe that distributive justice perceptions render the family firm into a more attractive object to be psychologically appropriated and that they will also foster the investment of non-family employees’ personal resources. This will ultimately strengthen non-family employees’ ownership feelings toward the family business.

Further research in this area will clarify these finding especially if it compares non-family employees with family members in these respects. Such a comparison will reveal differences in terms of perceived justice and help the researcher to determine whether the difference has an influence on employee’s psychological ownerships.

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